

1985

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**MONUMENT
TO A REVOLUTION**

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AN ENACTMENT
BY ANDJEAS EJKSSON
IN COLLABORATION WITH
KOMPANI GIRAFF

FOREWORD

*In which a faraway background to the
spectacle unfolds.*

“The Storming of the Winter Palace”, which was enacted in 1920, created a mythic monument to the emancipation of the masses by the socialist state. For Nikolai Evreinoff, who led the production of the enactment, it was also a step towards merging theatre and life. The theatre served the revolution and the revolution served the theatre—both of them served life.

The scenario was enacted at the Uritsky Square in St. Petersburg, in front of the Winter Palace, which was now both part of the scenery of the performance and a setting for the accompanying film. There was a consid-

erable effort to make the spectacle lifelike: machine guns rattled, lorries with thundering engines rushed across the square, and some of those who had taken part in the actual storming were now engaged as actors. During the course of an hour the audience experienced the entire revolutionary drama on this one spot, while in fact the revolution took place mainly elsewhere—the palace and its court had been relatively peaceful during the fight as it wasn't strategically important. Despite it being a strong symbol, the Red Guards waited until most of the soldiers had given up to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Eventually the storming was carried out with only a few guns being fired. Three years later the symbolic was so much more important.

Almost a hundred thousand people had gathered on the square in front of the palace when the clock turned ten and the scenery darkened. Then, a burst of cannon fire broke the silence and a huge orchestra began to play. The drama was centred on two plat-

forms, one red and one white. First the white side was introduced as a hundred spotlights, mounted on the surrounding buildings, were switched on. "The Worker's Marseillaise", arranged as a polka, was played while society awaited the arrival of Prime Minister Kerensky. And when he finally showed up, he was followed by a choir which he led. Entering the scene, roses and ovations were heaped upon him, bankers pushed bags of money towards him across the stage, bureaucrats declared their loyalty to the minister, officers with military decorations and monocles carried signs that celebrated war. Kerensky spoke to his esteemed audience.

When the speech ended, the light was switched off again and the spotlights were swiftly redirected towards the red platform. There, the drama was performed in small collective formations, each character was formed by a group of actors and there were no separate individuals. A few hundred workers poured out from the factories that had been installed as a back drop. Sud-

denly, the stream of workers stopped. They were listening for something. For a while it was almost quiet, then a vague tune. Barely audible the orchestra played "The Internationale", as though from a far off distance. A deafening roar from the masses broke the stillness: "Lenin! Lenin! Lenin!". The spectators shouted until the words dissolved in a murmur. Meanwhile the red platform had changed. The spotlights had become more intense and the masses, who, in a chaotic flood of limbs climbed up onto the stage, began to organise and gather around a red banner. They were singing and when "The Internationale" broke through in full force the tumult of bodies had finally turned into the Red Guard. They had gathered strength to attack the Whites. Many of them surrendered instantly. Kerensky resumed his speech, addressing his ministers whose seats had begun to sway. They fell to the floor. Kerensky himself escaped in a car that had been waiting in front of the stage. The ministers followed in another. After a hazardous

ride back and forth across the square, Kerensky was admitted into the palace. Meanwhile the fight between the Red Guard and the White soldiers intensified. Lights were switched on inside the palace, projecting a battle of shadows onto the windows. Different phases of the battle appeared in different windows and gradually the Reds increased their advantage, until they had defeated the Whites in every single battle. The revolution was complete and the cruiser Aurora, which had been illuminating the palace from the river behind, was now moving its searchlights to a spot above the roof. There, against the dark sky, an enormous red banner was floating in the wind. Red light was streaming from the palace windows. Kerensky took flight.

THE FIRST PART

In which a boat arrives with the participants.

Not far from the narrow outlet where Kolström dissolves into Baggensfjärden is a building—the villa we call Baggensnäs. For many years the place was part of a manor, but in the early nineteen hundreds the small strip of land was carved out and bought by a building contractor and former water polo champion named Max Gumpel. He used it as a summer residence and during the years that followed extensive reconstructions were made, so that eventually the villa assumed a more elegant appearance, abreast of the times. When Gumpel passed away in the mid 1960s the estate sold the property to the Swedish Central Bank, which in turn

handed it over to their employees as a gift, on the bank's three hundredth anniversary. The buildings and a row of small houses that were set up next to the villa, were used for recreation, holidays and for conferences. Well, perhaps gift is the wrong word, as it was in fact a form of loan and in 2005 the bank decided to sell the place. The villa is now owned by someone else, who will remain a stranger in this story.

As the autumn chill lightly loses its grip on a September day, a boat approaches from across the bay. Its journey from the landing stage on Strömkajen had not exactly been an adventure. It had travelled straight through modest waters, passing by the world at a slight yet comforting distance. The surrounding shores had been slumbering indifferently, the birds hiding from the wind. There had not been much to see, only water and more water. Then it had travelled through the narrow strait and out onto Baggensfjärden, and now the boat suddenly careens in such a way that the stern is ful-

ly visible; two giant shadows appear to be pressing the hull down into the waves. And out of this dun coloured, somewhat shapeless substance, two trunks are raised and cry out with the roar of a steamer—just like that, the surroundings are snapped out of their late summer doze.

An abrupt trumpet blast—a starting signal. Almost as instantly it disappears. The animals move uneasily in the narrow space. Although used to confinement, they are increasingly anxious about the disappearing shoreline. It took an age to get them on board. First they had to be brought down onto the wharf. That alone was a risky enterprise, as they refused to move and dragged their rumps on the ground; grabbing with their trunks for anything they could get a hold of, as if they very well knew what was coming. After much effort their patience was gone. Nothing could make them step on board voluntarily and so with an improvised crane they were simply lifted up into the air and onto the boat. There on the stern, they

were stuck, moving about nervously. What had been announced as an adventurous expedition into the archipelago and a piece of history, turned out to be full of rather nervous suspense.

Well, at Baggensnäs the passengers have to wait on the boat until the elephants are safely on the shore. Probably none of them had seen an elephant climb off a boat before and it might have been a quite amusing show, if only it were possible to watch their efforts. The whole thing proceeds with a terrible grubbing and scratching and screaming and trumpeting and other sounds that have no name; it ends with a crash and two almost simultaneous splashes. More waiting follows. Now relatively quiet, only the sound of wind and water and chattering, until finally the other passengers are invited to go ashore.

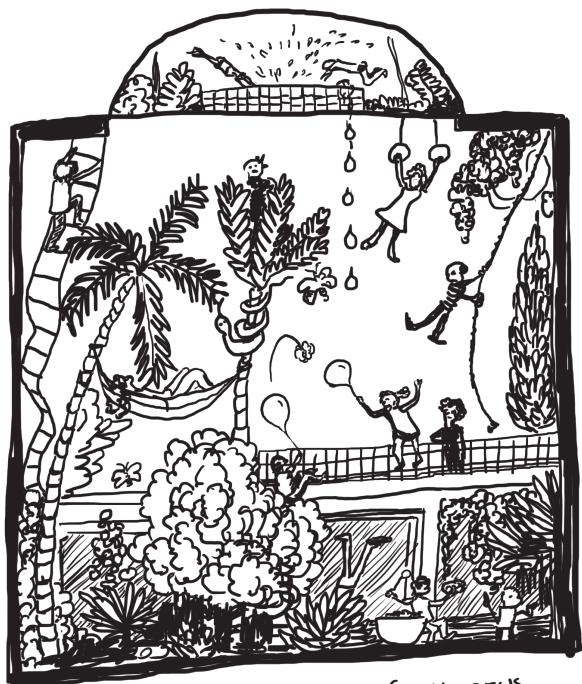
THE SECOND PART

*In which the inside of the National bank is
revealed as a myth of transition.*

On the slope leading upwards from the water is a garden with wild bushes, oak trees and a narrow path that abruptly ends at the façade of a high building. It is a sternly beautiful grid of windows and black granite, that certainly inspires respect. However, rumours say that the solid shell hides a chaotic interior and a vegetation of amusements and delights.



From *Bancoposten*, no. 1/1979.



SANNINGENS
ÖGONBLICK

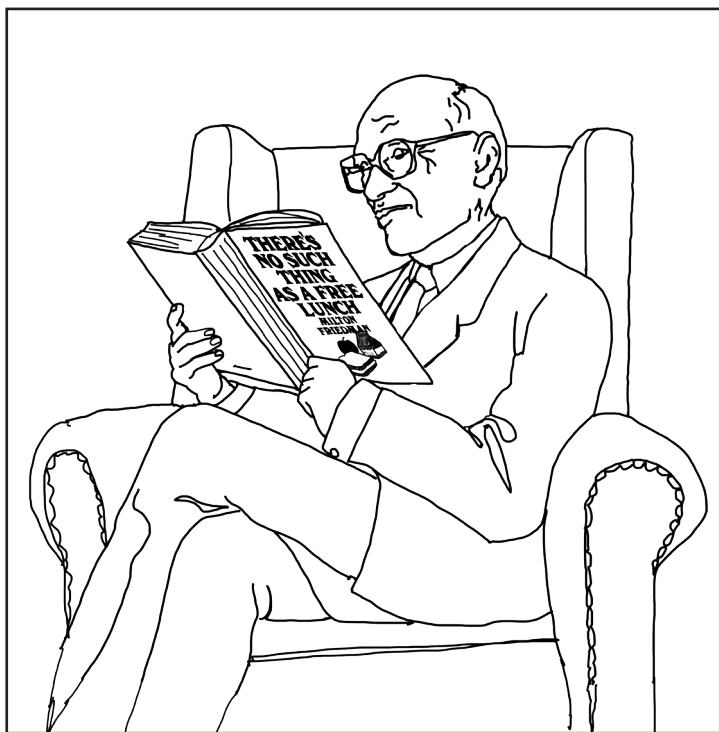
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THE THIRD PART

In which a tea party is arranged.

Noon has turned into afternoon when tea is served in the salon. Pastries are distributed from a table. Sounds of crockery and cutlery tinkling against each other. A murmur of voices fills the inside of the house, stimulating it to somehow reach for memories of past events. Now and then one can make out fragments of one or other conversation. In the back of the room is a man playing the piano. It is the kind of music that creates a comfortable atmosphere. He clears his throat and leans in discretely to one of the guests: "I'll do my best to find out how things are. It appears to have fallen to me to keep my eyes and ears open." He nods

towards a group of people standing in the doorway, “But I’m mainly here to play the piano.” By the window is one of the waiters trying to give the scenario a more scholarly context: “Surely it has to do with things that happened in the political landscape of the 1980s. The economy was difficult to keep in balance and impossible to regulate. That is how it’s usually described. Or, well, I guess it began already in the 1970s with industry’s waning profits and increased unemployment. And all those crises, maybe they became different at that time. They sort of got a hold of things in new ways.” Someone else fills in: “The situation required a change out of the ordinary, something monumental, almost like a revolution.” She smiles. It is difficult to tell whether she wants to emphasise some sort of irony, or just add another thoughtful gesture. The others nod as they continue eating their pastries in silence.



THE FOURTH PART

*In which the silent flute orchestra performs and
the tea party draws to an end.*

Many versions of the story have been told before. Some say it is a mere allegory that has little resemblance to the actual past, others claim that there are facts which confirm its authenticity. In any case, it is a remarkable image. The year was 1985 when here and there silent pipers appeared wearing different personalities. The observations were often contradictory; one witness describes a young man dressed in a grey overall sitting on a park bench. Another claims to have seen a sharp looking elderly woman walking back and forth on a city street, with her fingers traveling over a mute pipe. But probably the most unexpected observation can be

found in the biography of Kjell-Olof Feldt, who was the Swedish Minister of Finance at that time. It was in the autumn, during a meeting with the Prime Minister Olof Palme regarding the state budget. Feldt went on about regulations and balances as usual, but when after a long while he looked up, Feldt realised that Palme had taken up a recorder, which he was silently playing. There are no coherent explanations for these observations—if they are connected or if they even happened—nevertheless it seems that the political and administrative transformations of that autumn, were orchestrated by the melodies of silent flutes.

THE FIFTH PART

In which the view of the bay and the Grand Hotel far away on the other side is contemplated.

Towards the end of an afternoon on Värmdö, both outside and within a yellow brick villa. Any introduction aside from the view down the slope and over the bay is quite redundant at this stage. A cone of air juts out towards the other side, then past the horizon and eventually through the sky where it disappears. The telescope can't reach that far. Even if it did, its sight line would be partly disrupted by the oaks in the garden. The symmetry and clarity of the view is somehow already lost, and as the sky darkens the air is filled with dusk that presses on the glass, the indoor lighting barely holds against it. By

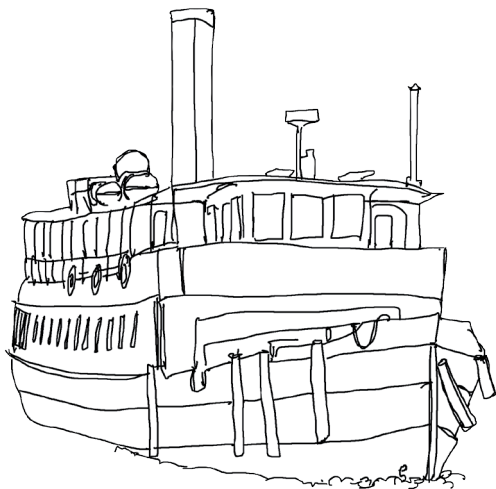


the window in the salon is a motley group of people. They contemplate the view and that which has not yet vanished in time.

Over there is Saltsjöbaden, and in-between, Baggensfjärden. A little to the right was once the landing spot of an invasion. The occupying soldiers were lodged in the buildings around here, which they burned to the ground as they were chased back onto the bay. Well, that is not very relevant for the viewers and the telescopic eye sweeps further along the shore line. It looks beyond the water. Far away on the other side is a marina, sailing boat masts, wooded hills, buildings. And there, on the tip of the tongue where lights twinkle in the wind, is the Grand Hotel. The place of the model agreement, where the negotiations were held and where the struggles between the labour market forces were finally regulated. From there to here is the passage between one end and the other of a history, that has just dissolved in a change of policies.

THE SIXTH PART

*In which the participants leave the island
on the boat.*



COLOPHON

Concept, script, and set design: Andjeas Ejiksson

Direction: Viktoria Dalborg

Costume and set design: Ellen Utterström

Make-up: Uuve Jansson

Impresario: Eric Schoeffler

Performers: Jan Unestam, Sara Runsten,
Axel Adlercreutz, Anne Weshinskey,
Aedín Walsh, Jenny Soddu.

Extras: Julia Sirelius, Nicolas Schoeffler

Pastries: Lena Eriksson

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